
ABROAD

ROME

Not Dying

No matter how many arrests are made, the supply of Mafiosi seems endless. Dr. Riccardo Boccia, newly appointed chief of the country-wide campaign against the Mafia, acknowledged that this was the case in spite of hundreds of arrests, some of them highly publicized, made in recent months through the confessions of Mafia *pentiti*. "Grave blows have been inflicted upon the Godfathers," Boccia said, "but the organization is not dying at all. Its power is still alive and strong." Boccia had just returned from Sicily where he had gone to investigate one of the most savage Mafia crimes ever recorded—a mother and her six-year-old twin sons killed when a car bomb exploded in Trapani in western Sicily. The bomb was intended for Carlo Palermo, a public prosecutor recently transferred to the island. It was so powerful it blew the children's bodies two hundred yards away. Meanwhile, 37 suspects, many of them outwardly respectable business and professional men, have been indicted in Milan as belonging to the Mafia's "White Collar Department."

UTRECHT

Confronting

Of all Pope John Paul II's foreign travels, his May 11 to 15 trip to Holland is probably the most difficult visit he has yet paid to a Roman Church in the West. Dutch Catholics have long been in the vanguard of liberal opposition to Rome and in particular to the conservative rulings and orientation of John Paul II. In the last twenty years, Dutch laymen, priests, and theologians alike have tended to regard ecclesiastical modes as part of the social revolution that has made Holland a cockpit of domestic strife. The crisis of the Dutch Church cannot be blamed entirely on this pontificate, however. Between 1966 and 1972, for example, attendance at Mass dropped from 64 to 40 per cent of registered Catholics, and is now at an even lower figure. The Dutch are indignant about the conservative character of the Pope's episcopal appointments; however, there is a new papal nuncio in Holland, the Australian Archbishop Edward Cassidy, who presents himself as a "force for reconciliation," and reconciliation is certainly the theme of the papal visit. The Vatican hopes the Dutch will see in John Paul II the emblem of the historic papacy, the strongest appeal that can be made in these circumstances.

LONDON

Soaring Costs

American travelers in Europe have long realized that air fares charged by European airlines within the Continental limits are far higher than those for equivalent distances in the United States. Now the Adam Smith Institute has worked out just how much higher: on the average 2.6 times, and sometimes three times. The report said that the American air-travel market had grown 11.2 per cent after four years of deregulation, and that 14 new airlines had been created by 1983. In Europe, it continued, "there are too few planes flying and too few destinations at too high cost. A dose of competition is long overdue." Airline staff

productivity is one-third lower than in the United States as a result. If the 18 European airlines were to achieve American productivity levels, they would have to cut their ground crews by 100,000 employees. For example, the 209 miles between Paris and London are flown at a per-mile cost of 47 cents. The flight between New York and Washington, 203 miles, costs 17 cents per mile. At the other end of the scale, it costs 29 cents a mile to fly the 1,600 miles between Madrid and Stockholm, and only 8 cents a mile to fly the equivalent distance between Houston and San Francisco.

SALISBURY

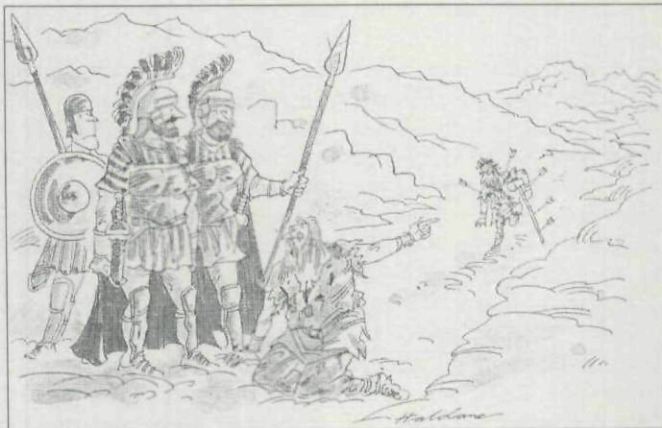
The Stones

The great stone monoliths that make up the famous primeval site of Stonehenge near here have long been attributed to pre-Christian construction by Druids for use in their seasonal rites. Now the National Trust, the site's guardian, has decreed that Druids, of whom a remnant persists in modern Britain, are no longer welcome there and has canceled the druidic ceremony of the summer solstice in June. It seems that the Druids' activities at Stonehenge had become so closely linked to a pop music festival on the same ground that one could not be dismissed without dismissing the other. Whether the jazz or the Druids were the chief attraction, thirty thousand people were in the habit of camping around the ancient shrine, some for as long as six weeks. The Bronze Age barrows became strewn with garbage, and motorbikes tore up the surface of the burial ground, threatening what the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission describes as "one of the most sensitive sites" in Britain.

BARCELONA

Fine Points of Working

The prostitutes and transvestites of Barcelona are trying to form a labor union to protect their activities following a series of recent clashes with the police. Ten folders of projected bylaws for the union have been collected for presentation to the appropriate authorities of the municipal government. But already legal problems have been encountered: According to present law, the petitioners may have to form not a union but a cultural or civic association. The principal stumbling block is the fact, according to legal experts, that the syndicalist movement in Spain would not recognize the activities of such groups as real "work."



"And now, for a detailed report on today's events at Thermopylae, I hand you over to Polycrates, our special war correspondent."

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